

[Mrs. Fred Brooks]

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NAME OF WORKER Ruby E. Wilson ADDRESS R. 1 Box 10b 1 W. front

DATE September 22, 1938 SUBJECT Lincoln Co. Folklore

1. Name and address of informant Mrs. Fred Brooks, 503 [East?] 4th
2. Date and time of interview Sept. 22, 1938 9:30-11:30 a.m.
3. Place of interview Kitchen of her home 6 [?]
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant Mrs. Ella Skinner [West?] 10th
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. An ordinary home cheerful and not at all pretentious, comfortable and clean though at hour visited was a bit disordered but has that lived in air.

NAME OF WORKER Ruby E. Wilson ADDRESS R. 1. box 10b W. front

DATE September 21, 1938 SUBJECT Lincoln Co. Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mrs. Fred Brooks 503 East 4th Street

1. Ancestry Father born at Sheffield England in 1829 Mother born at Alankashire England in 1846

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2. Place and date of birth [North?] Platte, Nebraska Sept. 8, 1872

3. Family [Eleven?] children

Place lived in, with dates North Platte, Nebraska only

4. Education, with dates medium

5. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates housewife and mother of large family.

Special skills and interests Her family records, her home and friends. Is deeply interested in Lincoln County and its progress.

Community and religious activities Has been active but not so much any more.

Description of informant Is short and quite heavy, brown eyes and grey hair, is friendly and motherly.

Otherpoints gained in interview Mrs. Brooks retains that undeniable refinement. Is quiet and thoroughly reliable.

My father went to what would be a University here, in England and while he was there his folks were killed in a flood. After he finished school he and his boy friend came to America, to Fort Wayne, Indiana. My father and mother were married in 1868, Sept11.

Later my father lost his health and came West. He was so bad that he has to stop and become acclimated every so often. Omaha had been a stopping place and mother stayed there while father came on to the Platte. He was intending to go to California by short trip.

There had just been an uprising among the Sioux Indians, they had tore up the railroad track by Brule and Julesburg and every available man was sent up there. My father was and he hurt his knee while there. He came back to North Platte and there had been a

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vacancy in the office of the District-Superintendent, he took the job and worked there until the office was finally closed in changes in the railroad.

Mother came in July after my father's coming in May. I was born in Sept. in a new frame house my father had had built where the State theatre and "Joes" filling station, now are, our house was of lumber but lots of the [truses?] then were made of logs and sod. The section and railroad men had done the building of it on Sundays and at nights when they were not doing their regular work. Father always said our place would be a business corner some day.

Hundreds and hundreds of people came to North Platte but when my folks came I think it was [O?] the population was then. Men came in boxcars, just some straw on the floor for them and they would bring them out to where they were going and open the doors and give them balck coffee and bread and jerkin or cured meat and they would to to work and were glad too. They hid their money to save it and buried it.

They got father to write for / them and he wrote lot of letters to all countries, Itly, Greece, Ireland, Scotland and many others. He sent hundreds of dollars to other countries too. The men often wanted father to take pay but he didn't believed in any sort of the crookedness and he would not take their pay. He was glad to see them save it and bring their families over. They could not get prepared foods then in the stores and he knew they would be better off if their folks came.

Some times people came and needed something to eat or ways to get along. Father would always give them what they needed and if they needed shelter he would give them part to the house to live in and fuel to burn. But [if?] they didn't treat father giv right or were dishonest in some way father would not say anything to them but they never needed to come back.

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We always had plenty to live on, father had a little money and he had his work and later he farmed.

I remembered remember we used to get thick catalogues from Montgomery Wards, they started up the year I was born and there were a few families that my folks always neighbored with, not many, and in the fall they all put in a big order together and it came in a big box about Christmas time.

[Once?] I knew my folks were going to make out the order that night after we children had gone to bed and I listened to see what I was going to get for Christmas. They got big high overshoes and mittens and underwear for the family and they got me one of them fine grey plaids, the plaids were little, all trimmed with red silk and the dress was silk and I got a red hood. They got my sister the same but I could not wake her up to tell her. They dressed my older sister different of course, but the other sister and I got about the same.

They [got?] my brother a pair of skates and I was so made mad because they would not get me skates. Father said, "All right if you girls want to be tomboys I'll send and get material and you can have parts made like your brother and then you can skate." But in them days, people would have never forgot [if?] a girl [???] like they do nowadays as we didn't get skates.

I remember my brother always had to clean out the ice in the hole in his shoe heels. Then they had to make a hold to set a plate on that some way tightened in the hole in the shoe heel. I used to help my brother with a pen knife to clean his shoes. He and I were close together.

Father was a sportsman and loved to hunt. He had a gun made to order for his fancy shooting. It was [a?] No 10 muzzle loading light but steel. He could pick off quail, one right after another and they had to be good shots to do that. There were quail and grouse and

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prairie chickens and wild geese and ducks and [ourlens?] and antelope and elk and deer and buffalo. The buffalo came right into town then.

My father was a good horse man too and rode as they are taught in England. He was not afraid of any horse and could saddle and bridle as good as any and ride them. His health was so bad though that he didn't ride much at times.

North Platte was a wild little town in them days. There was no law enforcement and not much law. Cowboys would come in and shoot up the town and drink up their money and go out drunk or dead. Railroad men used to drink a lot too, there was no restriction against it then and engineers and all would go out so drunk they had to be helped into their cab.

The Unitarians I think was the first protestant church here though I believe there was a Catholic church. The Unitarians had their church in where the Baptist church and Post Office is. There was a cemetary there too. I remember when they moved it, they moved every corpse they could, but then lots of times men were wrapped in a blanket for burial and there was no box or lost of times people were just buried in a rough nos and the high water here in this ground soon decayed all traces of lots of them. The new cemetary was 5 acres, they have bought more since, North Of Iowa, town.

After the Division-Superintendant office was closed my father took a timber claim in the West Hinman precinet about 10 miles from North Platte, it lays in between Nicholas school and the Platte Valley school. We proved up on the timber claim then took a home-stead covering the timber claim and proved up [on?] that. Mother could never adjust herself to farming. She had been an orphan, she and her brother were raised by an uncle and two old maid Aunts and were pampered and petted and raised luxuriously and she didn't know how to work and she was timid and afraid and it used to be that when she went to bed at night she never expected to see daylight. [Women?] never went out in the streets at night and often sat with their lights out.

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Father lived to see this country turn from a cattle country into an irrigated farm country. He lived till July 10, 1892, Mother passed away in 1908. Father had lots of faith in this country, he saw it was rich with cattle, at that time buffalo grass grew as high as your waist and he knew the country would grow.